Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Judge E. Curtissa R. Cofield

Date 2004 July 14

Primary Maker E. Curtissa R. Cofield

Description Oral history interview with Judge E. Curtissa R. Cofield who was interviewed by John Rose, Jr. on July 14, 2004 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession Project. Topics Discussed: - Early Life: Born in Somerville, New Jersey, Curtissa Cofield primarily grew up in Enfield, North Carolina, until about age twelve. Her father was a Baptist minister, and her mother was a retired school teacher and AIDS activist. The family moved to New Haven around 1970. - Interest in Law: Her interest in law was significantly shaped by her experience growing up in the segregated South in the 1960s. A pivotal incident at age twelve in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, where her father faced racial discrimination at a restaurant, motivated her. She was inspired by figures like Martin Luther King, her parents, and Thurgood Marshall, seeing law as a means to achieve justice. - High School: She attended Lexington High School in Lexington, Virginia, where she was the first African American female student. During this time, she was active in church and volunteered as a Candy Striper at Stonewall Jackson Hospital. - College: Curtissa Cofield attended Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, graduating in 1971, and also spent two years at North Carolina Central University. She majored in psychology and philosophy. - Yale Divinity School: She earned a Masters of Arts in Religion from Yale Divinity School in 1973.

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Despite her studies, she chose not to enter the ministry due to the Baptist Church not ordaining women at the time. - Law School Education: She graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1978. Her class included about five Black women. She was involved in the Black American Law Students Association. Mentors included local Black lawyers like John Rose Jr., Professor John Britain, Attorney Sandy Cloud, and Attorney Joe Moniz. She worked at Legal Aid in New Haven and the Public Defender's office during summers. - Bar Admission: She took the Bar exam in 1978 and was sworn into the Bar in 1979 at the Washington Street Courthouse in Hartford.

Dimensions Duration: 3 Hours, 36 Minutes, 6 Seconds